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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SUBJECT Views of a French Expert on the  
Status of the Yugoslav Army

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1. A French expert has expressed an unfavorable opinion of the qualitative aspect of the Yugoslav Army stating that it could not resist any attack for a period longer than several weeks. The following represents his information on the status of the Yugoslav Army and the conclusions reached:

a. Aviation. The Yugoslav Air Force lacks homogeneity, comprising as it does different types of aircraft from different countries. The Yugoslav Air Force has the following types of aircraft:

- 25X1B 1) Approximately fifty Messerschmidt, [REDACTED] with spare parts for only 15 of the planes.
- 2) Twelve JU 88 bombers. Spare parts are available for all these craft.
- 3) Approximately fifty Fieseler Storch 157 reconnaissance aircraft. These fell into the hands of the Yugoslavs upon the occasion of the capitulation of the German Army commanded by Weiss.
- 25X1B 4) Fifty-six [REDACTED] no spare parts are available.
- 5) Approximately fifty Spitfires of which only one-third are of the latest model. Spare parts are available for only 20 of the latter.
- 6) Nine United States Flying Fortresses.
- 7) Forty Glenn Martin 1942 bombers obtained from the Soviets and which have been modernized.
- 8) Eighty-eight YAK pursuit planes of the old model with a speed below 600 kilometers per hour.
- 9) Two squadrons of Stormovic planes.
- 10) Approximately one hundred aircraft of national production. The greater part of these consisted of [REDACTED] planes and none of the one hundred craft can be considered suitable for combat duty.

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- b. Mechanized Units. The Yugoslav Armored Forces possess approximately forty-five Tiger tanks but have spare parts for only 24 of these. In addition, it possesses 30 Sherman tanks, 150 Soviet T-34 tanks, with spare parts for only 90 of these, and 300 old-type Skoda tanks which are more or less in a good state but lacking in spare parts. To this total must be added the mechanized vehicles of national production. The Yugoslav factories, however, only produce medium and light tanks which are imperfect because of the lack of raw materials. The Yugoslav arms factories, by exploiting the work hours of their employees to the fullest, could furnish approximately seventy tanks a month.
- c. Artillery. Yugoslav artillery is in bad shape and more heterogeneous than any other of the specialized branches. No single artillery brigade is equipped with homogeneous weapons, the armament consisting of French 75 mm., Austrian 88 mm., and 105 mm., some Italian and Soviet cannons. An added inconvenience is the fact that two-thirds of all the artillery is horse-drawn, which would be a serious disability if an armed encounter should take place on the northern plains of Yugoslavia. There is a marked lack of heavy artillery in spite of the fact that the national factories, particularly the Rankovicevo factory, works on a 24-hour basis in three shifts on the manufacture of heavy cannons.
- d. Quality of the command cadres. With the exception of certain former royalist officers who fled from the purges and several officers who participated in the Spanish Civil War, all other officers are completely ignorant of modern warfare, but have considerable experience in guerrilla warfare. However, there is no lack of a fighting spirit among the troops. Tito's Army, taken in its entirety, can only undertake delaying action vis-a-vis the eastern forces. Such delaying action could only last several weeks at best and rests upon the condition that no internal disruption take place in the army immediately after mobilization.

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